

# Governmental Unit Boundary Data Content Standard

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Progress Report  
to the SCDD  
February, 1999

# Background

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- ◆ The SCDD submitted a *Proposal for a National Spatial Data Infrastructure Standards Project* to the FGDC SWG in November 1997
- ◆ The Proposal was accepted and completed Public Review in April 1998
- ◆ Four comments were received
  - A limited, but favorable, response!

# Objectives

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- ◆ To provide consistency in the maintenance and interchange of governmental unit (GU) boundaries, *and*
- ◆ facilitate the analysis of and comparison between GU boundaries

# Scope

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- ◆ An FGDC data content standard, *that will*
- ◆ identify and provide semantic definitions and rules for utilizing components for describing boundaries
- ◆ Applicable only to GU boundaries, *though*
  - principles may be extended to describe the boundaries of other geographic entities

# Limited to GU boundaries ... why?

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- ◆ Responsibility for the GU boundary theme of Framework data assigned to Commerce Dept. (designated to the Census Bureau) under OMB Circular A-16
- ◆ The SCDD is chaired by the Census Bureau
- ◆ “Other” boundaries determined by the SCDD in early discussions to be outside of the regulatory authority of the SCDD

# A proposed alliance

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- ◆ The FGDC International Boundary Subcommittee has approached the SCDD
- ◆ Develop a jointly sponsored Standard applicable to both GU and International boundaries
- ◆ Pros and Cons?
  - Shared workload
  - Dual sponsorship potentially carries more weight
  - Uniqueness of International Boundaries potentially requires additional considerations

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The initial approach to developing  
the Governmental Unit Boundary  
Data Content Standard

Concepts for SCDD discussion,  
review, and approval

# Definition of a GU

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◆ From FIPS Publication 55-3\* description

“A geographic entity that has the ability to have elected officials and raise revenues through taxes.”

\*Codes for Named Populated Places, Primary County Divisions, and other Locational Entities of the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Outlying Areas



# FGDC-recognized GUs

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- ◆ Nation
- ◆ States and statistically equivalent areas
- ◆ Counties and statistically equivalent areas
- ◆ Incorporated places and consolidated cities
- ◆ Functioning and legal minor civil divisions (in 28 states and the District of Columbia)
- ◆ Federal- or State-recognized American Indian Reservations and Trustlands
- ◆ Alaska Native Regional Corporations

# Census Bureau-recognized GUs

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- ◆ All FGDC-recognized GUs, *plus*
- ◆ then some. Examples include
  - County Subdivision (such as a Township in Missouri and a Village in American Samoa)
  - School District
  - Sub-Minor Civil Division ( such as a Subbarrio in Puerto Rico)
  - Unorganized Borough (found only in Alaska)
  - Voting District

# Your agency's recognized GUs

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# Important: The Standard will ...

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- ◆ ... specify the content necessary for the successful interchange of a GU boundary
- ◆ ... NOT specify a particular structure for either storage or interchange of boundary files
  - data producers and users may structure GU boundaries in any desired format for their internal use and interchange

# Metadata analogy

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- ◆ The Standard is very similar to the FGDC Content Standards for Digital Geospatial Metadata
  - Components used to describe the characteristics of a boundary
  - GU Boundary Description Components rather than Metadata Elements
  - Presented in the Metadata graphic format for easy assimilation by users

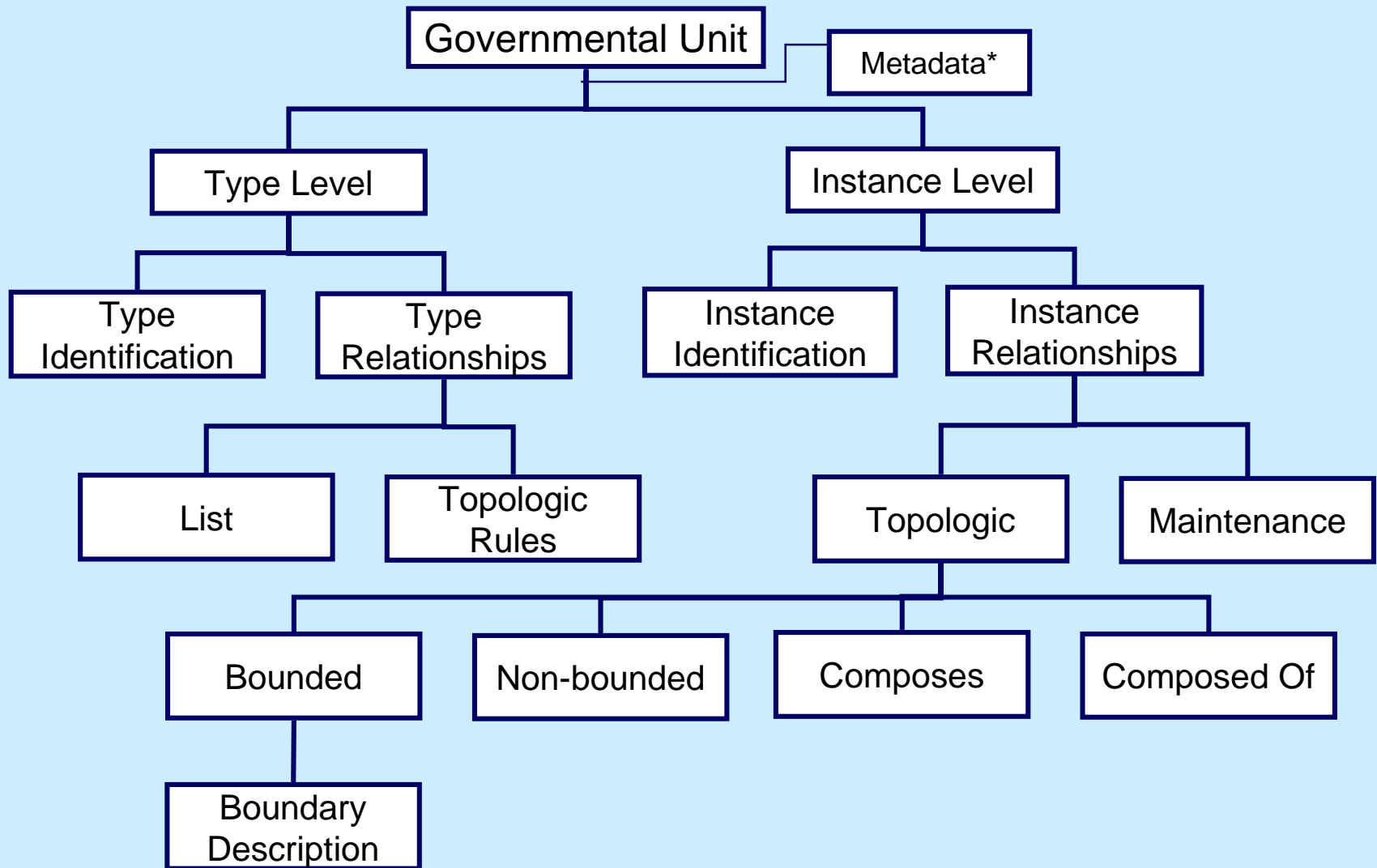
# Determining what GU Boundary Description Components are necessary to describe a boundary

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- ◆ Based on a “model”
  - It was found in order to describe GU boundaries, additional description of a GU entity required
- ◆ Based on a need to acknowledge and accommodate existing standards
  - SDTS (now an ANSI Standard)
  - FGDC Cadastral Data Content Standard
  - FGDC Content Standards for Digital Geospatial Metadata

# A generalized model of information describing GUs

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# GU Boundary Description Component

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- ◆ Identifies and stores discrete units of information
- ◆ Defined by seven characteristics
  - Name
  - Definition
  - Obligation
  - Condition
  - Maximum Occurrence
  - Data Type
  - Domain Values



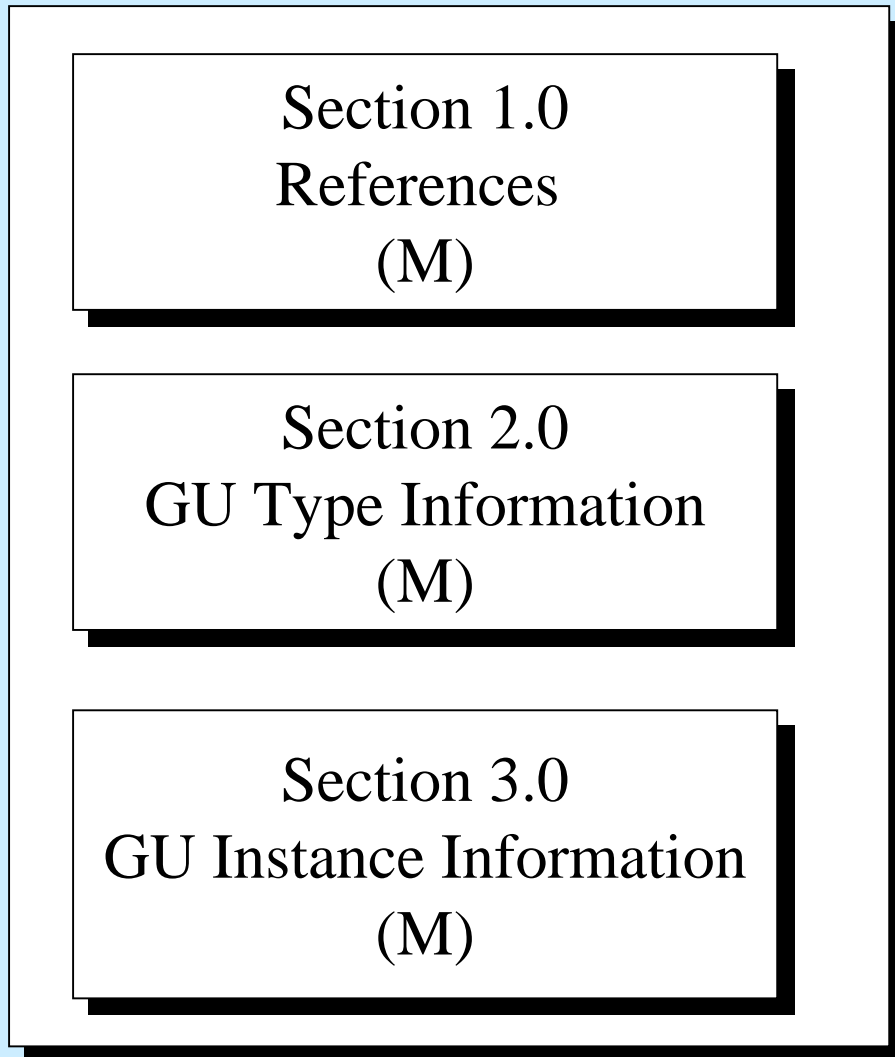
# GU Boundary Description Components are

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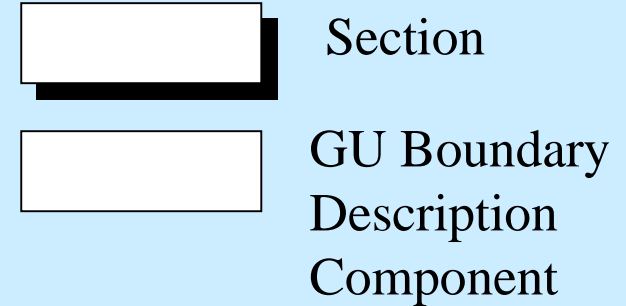
- ◆ Organizationally presented in three sections
  - Section 1.0 References
  - Section 2.0 Type Information
  - Section 3.0 Instance Information

# Overview of Sections

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## LEGEND



## Obligation:

M = Mandatory

C = Conditional

O = Optional

**More than one  
occurrence allowed**

*repeatable*

# Introducing

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- ◆ The SCDD's new GU Boundary Data Content Standard technical expert and mentor:

Brian Ristola

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